

REMARKS

Claims 2-5 and 8-12 are currently pending.

Amendments

Claims 2-4, 8 and 9 have been amended to recite that the "lactides" are "cyclic lactides." Support for the amendments can be found throughout the specification and at least at paragraph [0005]. Entry of the above amendments is respectfully requested.

§ 102(e) - Ahmed et al.

Claims 2-5 and 8-10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by the Ahmed et al. patent (US Pat No. 6,534,572). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

As amended, representative claims 4 and 9 recite a non-acidic compound selected from acid anhydrides, cyclic lactides, butyrolactone, valerolactone, glucuronolactone, starch acetate and cellulose acetate.

The Ahmed et al. patent does not teach or suggest each feature of the present invention, as set forth in representative claims 4 and 9. The Office has admitted, on page 3 of the June 14, 2006, Office Action, that:

the closest prior art of record, U.S. Patent 6,534,572 to Ahmed, fails to disclose a superabsorbent material comprising a non-acidic, cyclic lactide in combination with superabsorbent material. The superabsorbent composition of Ahmed comprises a polylactide, and during the polymerization process the ring of the lactide monomers is opened to form the polylactide. Therefore, Ahmed does not teach nor fairly suggest the claimed invention.

Accordingly, the Ahmed et al. patent does not teach or suggest a non-acidic compound selected from acid anhydrides, cyclic lactides, butyrolactone, valerolactone, glucuronolactone, starch acetate and cellulose acetate.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 2-5 and 8-10 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by the Ahmed et al. patent, be withdrawn.


Conclusion

Applicants believe they have responded to all matters raised in the above referenced Office Action and that the application is now in condition for allowance. If the Examiner has any questions concerning this Application or this Reply and Amendment, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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